

National Institutes of Health Graduate Student Council Constitution

Article I. Name

The graduate students at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) shall be known collectively as the Graduate Student Body. Their official representative body shall be known as the Graduate Student Council (GSC).

Article II. Purpose

The purposes of the Graduate Student Council shall include the following:

- To represent the Graduate Student Body to the overall NIH community, especially to the Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP) and the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE).
- To ensure the general welfare and meet the needs of graduate students.
- To provide for and promote graduate student extracurricular activities.
- To facilitate the welcoming and orientation of new graduate students.
- To provide a formal means of communication among graduate students.

Article III. Membership

A. Graduate Student Body

Any student pursuing graduate studies at an accredited university who is also performing research at NIH shall be a member of the Graduate Student Body. Additionally, each student must also be registered with the NIH Graduate Partnerships Program and have his/her name maintained on the GPP roster.

B. Graduate Student Council

Any member of the Graduate Student Body is eligible to serve on the Council.

1. The representatives of the Graduate Student Council shall be chosen as follows:
 - i. Partnership Representation
Representatives for Institutional and Individual Agreements are outlined in the Bylaws.
 - ii. Committee Representation
Each committee and its means of representation are outlined in the Bylaws.
 - iii. At-Large Representation
Any current graduate student is welcome to attend and participate in meetings as part of the At-Large Representation

as long as the student signs the official meeting roster at the meeting the student attends.

2. The Graduate Student Council may establish standing or ad hoc committees to pursue specific goals of the Council. Each committee shall be chaired by at least one graduate student. Further details regarding Council committees shall be provided in the Bylaws.
3. The Officers of the Graduate Student Council shall be defined in Article IV of this Constitution.
4. Voting Procedures shall be defined in the Bylaws.

Article IV. Officers

The Graduate Student Council shall elect its Officers, who shall be the two Co-Chairs, the Treasurer, and the Secretary. The term of office is one year. No person may hold two offices simultaneously. A student may not be re-elected to the position of Co-Chair. No person may hold the same office for more than two full years. The Officers of the Council must be current members of the Graduate Student Body.

Article V. Elections

A. Election of Council Officers

The Co-Chairs shall be nominated by the Graduate Student Body by the end of the Council's November meeting and elected by the Graduate Student Body before the Council's December meeting. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be nominated by the Graduate Student Body by the end of the Council's December meeting and elected by the Graduate Student Body before the Council's January meeting. Further election procedures shall be defined in the Bylaws.

B. Election of Partnership Representatives

Partnership Representatives shall be nominated by the Graduate Student Body by the end of the Council's November meeting and elected by the respective represented populations before the Council's January meeting. Further election procedures shall be defined in the Bylaws.

C. Election of Committee Representatives

Committee Representatives shall be appointed by the Council on a voluntary as-needed basis. If two or more students volunteer for a position, election will proceed as outlined in the Bylaws. Further election procedures shall be defined in the Bylaws.

Article VI. Voting Procedure

Major decisions shall be voted on by the Council as outlined in the Bylaws.

Article VII. Council Meetings

A. Call to Meetings

Co-Chairs shall call regular meetings. At least one meeting per month must be held. Quorum procedures are outlined in the Bylaws.

B. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Council may be called to consider a special item or items of business by either Co-Chair or by petition of any ten graduate students.

Article VIII. Amendments

A. Constitution

Amendments to this Constitution may originate in the Council or through petition in writing by ten graduate students. Proposed amendments must be communicated to all graduate students and conspicuously posted for a period of at least two weeks before voting. Adoption requires at least a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the Council followed by a majority of the number of graduate students who submit a vote in the referendum. Council must vote within six weeks of posting a proposed amendment. A referendum must be held within six months of Council approval.

B. Bylaws

Bylaws may be amended by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the Council.

Article IX. Ratification

This Constitution and appended Bylaws shall be ratified by a majority of the graduate students who submit a vote in a referendum held before September 7, 2007, the date of the Graduate Student Retreat. The documents will take effect, if passed, on January 1, 2008, and will supersede all previous constitutions.

Graduate Student Council Bylaws

Article I. Duties of the Officers

A. Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs shall call and preside over meetings of the Council and Executive Committee (defined in Article II, Section D of the Bylaws). Nominees for Co-Chair must meet the following criteria at the time of nomination:

- Have completed at least one full year in residence at an NIH campus as a member of the Graduate Student Body.
- Have served as an active member of the GSC.

The Co-Chairs shall oversee the operations and activities of the Council and all committees. Additionally, they shall be responsible for representing the Graduate Student Body and communicating with the NIH community, especially the Graduate Partnerships Program. All duties will be equally distributed between Co-Chairs. Other specific duties of the Co-Chairs are enumerated below.

1. Creating the weekly compiled email sent out every Friday to the graduate student community via the Grad-L electronic mailing list. The weekly compiled email shall be a compilation of emails of potential interest from various other electronic mailing lists including Fellow-L. Additionally, the weekly compiled email shall include current graduate student community events.
2. At least 24 hours before each meeting, Co-Chairs shall create and distribute the agenda to the Graduate Student Body. During meetings, one Co-Chair shall preside over the meeting, and the other Co-Chair shall be responsible for parliamentary duties. These duties include adhering to the selected operation procedures chosen by the Officers to ensure that business is conducted in an efficient and timely manner (e.g. Robert's Rules of Order).
3. Presenting a year-end report of the Council at its last General Council Meeting before the new Council Officers begin their terms in office. Additionally, this year-end report shall be published in the GSChronicles.
4. Organizing the Mentor of the Year Award to be presented at the annual Graduate Student Research Symposium. Current students of third-year status or higher who have worked with their mentors for at least one year are eligible to apply by submitting letters to the Co-Chairs outlining why they think their mentors should be selected for the Mentor of the Year Award.
5. Accepting and facilitating pieces of legislation presented by the Council and/or by the Graduate Student Body.

B. Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for recording, posting, and filing the minutes of all Council meetings and maintaining the files of the Council. Other specific duties of the Secretary are enumerated below.

1. Collect votes at Council Meetings.
2. Maintain the roster for each meeting, including email addresses for the internal Council list and recording voting proxies, and ensure that quorum exists before each vote takes place.
3. Send quarterly tax reminders to all students.

C. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive, disburse, and account for all funds of the Council and its activities, present a written report of finances at least once per term, coordinate all budget and financial decisions, and coordinate the funding of student activities.

Article II. Committees

A. Committee Structure

Standing Committees (Year-round and Seasonal) of the Council shall be those defined in Article II, Section D of these Bylaws. Other committees may be formed by a majority vote on the Council; these shall be referred to as ad hoc committees. All ad hoc committees shall terminate within one year of formation. Unless specified otherwise, the membership of committees shall consist of graduate student volunteers who serve at the pleasure of the Council. All members of a committee are considered Committee Representatives in the GSC. Each Standing Committee shall elect a chairperson who shall represent the committee in the Executive Council.

B. Committee Procedures

Committees established by the Council must operate under the Council Constitution and Bylaws. Committees may form additional subcommittees as deemed necessary by the Council. If newly formed subcommittees are necessary beyond one year, it is the duty of the committee chairs to submit legislation to add the aforementioned subcommittee to the Bylaws. Committees may establish or modify formal operating guidelines through the passage of legislation at a General Council Meeting. General duties of all committees are enumerated below.

1. Report on their activities to the Council on a regular basis (generally, at the monthly Council meetings).
2. Inform the Co-Chairs of current developments.

3. Maintain pertinent documentation.
4. Handle the responsibilities of distributing publicity or otherwise communicating with the Graduate Student Body.
5. Alert the Council when committees are in need of new members. The Council shall appoint committee members as outlined in the Bylaws, Article VI.
6. Pass on essential information concerning committee operation to succeeding committee members.

C. Probation of Committee Members

1. Definition of Probation

Probation of a committee member shall last two months. This time period is an opportunity for the committee member under probation to fulfill his/her duties. At the conclusion of the two months, the Council shall review the committee member's performance and vote to either retain or dismiss the individual. Grounds for probation from a committee include not fulfilling the general duties outlined in Article II, Section B of the Bylaws or not fulfilling the committee-specific duties outlined in Article II, Section D or Section E of the Bylaws.

2. Initiation of Probation

An appeal for probation can be submitted by a member of the Council to any two members of the Executive Committee. A valid appeal shall include specific reasons for probationary status. The Co-Chairs shall notify the student in question, to confirm that he/she wishes to continue in his/her current position. Only after this consultation may the Co-Chairs present the appeal at the next Council meeting, while preserving the anonymity of the plaintiff. If the committee member in question is a Co-Chair, another member of the Executive Committee shall fulfill this duty. A majority vote of the Council will then be conducted to place the committee member under probationary status.

D. The following Standing Year-Round Committees shall be established:

1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Council, chairpersons of Standing Committees and other persons appointed (and removable) by the Council. The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Council, have overall coordination of nominations, finances, and budgets not delegated to other committees, and may deal with all matters pertinent to the Council. All decisions on

nominations, finances, and budgets must be made after open hearings and approved by the Council. The Executive Committee shall convene at the call of either Co-Chair, or at the request of two members of the Council. Executive Committee meetings shall be closed unless decided otherwise by a majority of the committee.

2. Academic Committee

The Academic Committee shall consist of the organizers of the FAES Laboratory Techniques Course, the Biophysics and Structural Biology Interest Group, the Systems Neuroscience Interest Group, and all other student-organized interest groups. Students organizing the FAES Laboratory Techniques Course are in charge of communicating details with FAES, scheduling lecturers for all lectures, coordinating with the GPP to ensure all lecturers have teaching training prior to his/her lecture, and managing other details of the class. Students organizing student interest groups are in charge of securing a room for activities, communicating the meetings to the student body, maintaining a list of attendees, and organizing speakers.

3. Career Development

The Career Development Committee shall consist of Pathways and the Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS³).

i. Pathways

Pathways discussions featuring speakers representing different career paths shall occur no less than once every two months. The student(s) in charge of the discussions shall have the following duties: securing an appropriate venue, organizing speakers, and communicating the event to the student body.

ii. Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS³)

The Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS³) shall feature informal graduate student talks at least once a month. These talks shall be open to all members of the Graduate Student Body and shall be geared to that audience. The organizer(s) of GS³ shall have the following duties: securing an appropriate venue, organizing speakers, communicating the event to the student body, moderating the talks (including keeping presentations within the allotted time), and facilitating audience feedback.

4. Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee shall include the FelCom Representative, the GSC Webmaster/mistress, the GSX Yahoo!Groups moderator, and the GSChronicles Newsletter.

i. FelCom Representative

The FelCom Representative shall serve as the official GPP/GSC voting representative at all FelCom meetings. The term is one year. The FelCom Representative shall have the following duties: attend all FelCom meetings and represent the Graduate Student Body, attend all Council meetings, join at a least one FelCom subcommittee (see <http://felcom.nih.gov> for details about Bylaws and list of subcommittees) and serve as the liaison between the GSC and FelCom.

ii. GSC Webmaster/mistress

The GSC Webmaster/mistress shall maintain the official GSC website.

iii. GSX Yahoo!Groups Moderator

The GSX (Graduate Student Exchange) Yahoo!Groups moderator shall verify that all new members are members of the Graduate Student Body and maintain the Yahoo!Groups site.

iv. The GSChronicles Newsletter

The GSChronicles Newsletter Editor shall produce and distribute the GSChronicles monthly. The GSChronicles is the official graduate student newsletter which features important announcements and chronicles graduate student events.

5. Social Committee

The Social Committee shall be chaired by two Co-Chairs appointed by the Council. The duties of the Social Committee chairs shall include:

- Attending all GSC meetings.
- Organizing at least two events a month. One event shall be an after-work networking event. The other events shall include (but are not limited to): sporting events, museum visits, concerts, plays, movies, bowling, festivals, and planning social activities during orientation.
- Being in charge of the annual Graduate Student Holiday Party and the Orientation Barbeque.

6. Trainee Advisory Committee

The Trainee Advisory Committee shall serve as the graduate student representatives to the OITE (Office of Intramural Training and Education). The Committee shall also serve as the major representative body for each demographic of graduate students found at NIH. Duties of the Trainee Advisory Committee chairs shall include: attending all Graduate Student Council meetings and all Trainee Advisory Committee meetings, maintaining an email list for the represented demographic, communicating with the represented demographic on demographic-specific matters, and

facilitating the election of the Program Representatives. The Trainee Advisory Committee shall consist of the following chairs:

i. Institutional Partnerships Chair

Representing students in Institutional Partnerships

ii. US Individual Agreements Chair

Representing students in US Individual Agreements

iii. International Individual Agreements Chair

Representing students in International Individual Agreements

E. The following Standing Seasonal Committees shall be established:

1. Interview Committee

The Interview Committee shall convene before the Institutional Partnership Programs sponsor interviews for potential incoming students in the early spring. The Committee shall work with the Graduate Partnerships Program to inject student presence in the interview process. The Interview Committee shall consist of at least one representative for each institutional partnership. Each representative shall serve as an “interview coordinator” for his/her program. Interview coordinators will be appointed by the respective Institutional Partnership Representative(s). The duties of the interview coordinators shall be:

- To attend the interview committee meetings with the GPP.
- To send a welcome email to each interviewee introducing himself/herself and asking whether the interviewee has any questions.
- To match each interviewee up with a current student (preferably one with similar research interests) who will act as a contact point for any future questions.
- To organize current student involvement in the interview activities (e.g. social activities during interviews).
- To assist interviewees during the actual interview days.

Additionally, the interview coordinator should work with the Institutional Partnership Program Director to facilitate these activities.

2. Orientation Committee

The Orientation Committee shall convene before graduate student orientations occur during the summer. The committee shall work with the Graduate Partnerships Program to inject student presence in the orientation process and organize graduate student social events during orientation. Members of the orientation committee shall be appointed on a voluntary basis by the Council. The Orientation Committee shall also include the student(s) in charge of the Peer Mentor Program. The Peer Mentor Program organizer(s) shall be in charge of connecting new

students to older students as peer mentors based on program, research interests, or hometown. Peer mentors shall help new students orient themselves to graduate student life at NIH.

3. Retreat Committee

The Retreat Committee shall convene before the annual Graduate Student Retreat held in the early fall. The Committee shall work with the Graduate Partnerships Program to organize and facilitate the retreat.

4. Research Symposium Committee

The Research Symposium Committee shall convene before the annual Graduate Student Research Symposium. The Committee shall work with the Graduate Partnerships Program to organize and orchestrate the annual symposium. At least three current students shall create the Research Symposium Committee. The duties of the Research Symposium Committee members shall include:

- To update the Council on the progress of the symposium.
- To help choose students to give oral presentations based on abstracts.
- To facilitate the poster judging competition by working with FelCom.
- To moderate oral presentations.
- To create the slideshow of current graduate students to be shown during breaks.
- To select and invite keynote and opening speakers.

Article III. Partnership Representatives

A. Partnership Representatives Structure

The term of a Partnership Representative is one year. A student may be re-elected as a Partnership Representative. As representatives for their constituency, Partnership Representatives are expected to attend all Graduate Student Council meetings (but at minimum half of these meetings for each term), and relay important information to their constituency. It shall be recommended that all institutional Partnership Representatives maintain an electronic mailing list and document repository (a separate Yahoo!Group is ideal) to facilitate communication. Partnership Representatives may serve as Committee Representatives as well, but will only be allowed one vote.

Partnership Representatives shall be defined below (number of representatives indicated in parentheses):

1. US Individual Agreement (6)
2. International Individual Agreement (5)
3. Biomedical Sciences - George Washington University (1)
4. Biomedical Sciences - Georgetown University (1)
5. Cell, Molecular, Developmental Biology & Biophysics - Johns Hopkins University (1)

6. Neuroscience - Brown University (1)
7. Biomedical Sciences - University of Oxford (England) (1)
8. Health Sciences - University of Cambridge (England) (1)
9. Neuroscience - Karolinska Institute (Sweden) (1)
10. Institutional Agreement Group 1 - (1)
 - a. Bioinformatics - Boston University
 - b. Molecular Basis for Infectious Diseases - NIAID/RML & University of Montana
 - c. Structural Biology - New York University
11. Institutional Agreement Group 2 - (1)
 - a. Biophysics - University of Maryland, College Park
 - b. Sensory & Communication Neurosciences - NIDCD & University of Maryland, College Park
12. Institutional Agreement Group 3 - (1)
 - a. Cell Motility & Cytoskeleton - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 - b. Immunology - University of Pennsylvania
13. Institutional Agreement Group 4 - (1)
 - a. DVM/PhD: Molecular Pathology - NCI & NCSU / MSU / UIUC / UMD
 - b. Nursing/PhD: Nursing & Biobehavioral Research - NINR & JHU / OHSU / UCSF / UofI / UPitt / UofU

There are two ways Partnership Representative numbers may be changed.

1) Every October the number of Partnership Representatives must go to a vote before the Council. The Council shall reconsider the demographics of each group and adjust the weight of representation accordingly. As a general rule, Institutional Agreement Partnerships containing ten or more current students should be considered for independent group representation. Additionally, the number of Individual Agreement Representatives should reflect the ratio of current students in Individual Agreements in comparison to current students in Institution Agreements.

2) An Institutional Agreement Partnership may petition either to be represented as an independent group with one representative OR to increase the number of independent group representatives. This petition must be signed by all students in the Partnership (if the Partnership has less than 10 students), or fifty percent of current students in the Partnership. A Partnership may have up to 1 representative for every 10 students.

B. Probation of Partnership Representatives

1. Definition of Probation

Probation of a Partnership Representative shall last two months. This time period is an opportunity for the Partnership Representative under

probation to fulfill his/her duties. At the conclusion of the two months, the Council shall review the Partnership Representative's performance and vote to either retain or dismiss the individual. Grounds for Probation from a Partnership Representative office include not fulfilling the duties outlined in Article III, Section A of the Bylaws.

2. Initiation of Probation

An appeal for probation can be submitted by a member of the Council to any two members of the Executive Committee. A valid appeal shall include specific reasons for probationary status. The Co-Chairs shall notify the student in question, to confirm that he/she wishes to continue in his/her current position. Only after this consultation may the Co-Chairs present the appeal at the next Council meeting, while preserving the anonymity of the plaintiff. A majority vote of the Council will then be conducted to place the Partnership Representative under probationary status.

Article IV. Election of Officers

The Co-Chairs shall be nominated by the Graduate Student Body by the end of the Council's November meeting and elected by the Graduate Student Body before the Council's December meeting. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be nominated by the Graduate Student Body by the end of the Council's December meeting and elected by the Graduate Student Body before the Council's January meeting. Elections shall be administered by the two current Co-Chairs and can be held via email. Candidates accepting nominations shall submit a short statement and a photo to be posted on the GSC website and sent to the Graduate Student Body at least two weeks before elections close. In the case of only two accepted nominations for Co-Chair or one accepted nomination for Secretary or Treasurer, the voting procedure shall be bypassed and the nominees elected.

Article V. Election of Partnership Representatives

Partnership Representatives shall be nominated by the Graduate Student Body by the end of the Council's November meeting and elected by the representative population. Elections shall be run by the respective previous Partnership Representatives in Institutional Agreements or by the respective Trainee Advisory Committee Representatives utilizing the most up-to-date rosters and email lists from the GPP. In the case of a Partnership Representative running for re-election, the Trainee Advisory Committee will administer the election.

Article VI. Election of Committee Representatives

The election procedure for Committee Representatives is outlined in Article V, Section C of the Constitution. If two or more students volunteer for a position, election will be determined by the Council. For seasonal committees (e.g. Retreat, Symposium, and

Orientation Committees), the Co-Chairs will announce a general call for volunteers at a monthly GSC meeting and/or through the internal GSC listserv.

Article VII. Voting Procedures

Each Council Officer, Partnership Representative, Committee Representative, and At-Large Representative present at a meeting shall have one and only one vote in all matters at that meeting, even if the individual holds more than one office. Unless specified otherwise, voting decisions by the Council shall be made by a simple majority of those present at a Council meeting, provided quorum has been established. Further voting procedures shall be defined by Article VIII, Section C.

Article VIII. Procedures for Council Meetings

A. Scheduling of Council Meetings

1. The Co-Chairs shall call monthly meetings of the Council. At the end of each meeting, the next meeting time will be set, and schedule changes may only be made with at least two weeks' notice.
2. Special meetings of the Council may be called to consider a special item or items of business, by either Co-Chair, by two members of the Executive Committee, by four Council members, or by petition of any ten graduate students. Special meetings must be announced at least two weeks in advance and may not take place within one week of a regularly scheduled meeting.

B. Conduct of Council Meetings

1. Items will be placed on the agenda for Council meetings from the minutes of the previous meeting, from the past Executive Committee meeting (if applicable), or through written request one week in advance of the meeting by any member of the Graduate Student Body. Additional agenda items may be placed at the discretion of the Co-Chairs. Every Council meeting must allow time for Open Business.
2. The conduct of meetings shall be the responsibility of the Co-Chair acting as parliamentarian at that meeting. Meetings shall be open to all members of the Graduate Student Body and members of the Graduate Partnerships Program (unless specified otherwise by the Council).

C. Voting Process for Council Meetings

1. Issues to be voted on will be introduced into a two-month cycle in which the subject is first brought up for an initial discussion at a Council meeting, and voted upon at the subsequent Council meeting. Representatives will be expected to discuss the matter with their

constituencies in the intervening period between these Council meetings, and a venue for further discussion during this time will be provided if deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. If the Co-Chairs deem a legislative item too urgent to table the vote until the next meeting, they may bring the issue to an immediate vote.

2. An item of legislation already voted upon by the Council may be reconsidered if one of the following holds:

- a. It is shown that there has been substantive change in relevant circumstances since the earlier vote.
- b. The number of abstentions or absentees in the earlier vote was large enough to affect the outcome of the vote.

3. In order to proceed with a vote, quorum must be established. A majority of the Executive Committee (not including Standing Seasonal Committee Chairs) and Partnership Representatives shall constitute a quorum. A Council member may appoint a proxy by written request submitted to the Secretary, or to a Council member designated by the presiding officer if the Secretary is absent.

4. When a vote is taken, the taking of the roll of voting members and the vote count shall be the responsibility of the Secretary, or of a Council member designated by the presiding officer if the Secretary is absent.

5. Unless specified otherwise in the Constitution or Bylaws, an article of legislation shall pass if a majority of those voting members present vote in its favor.

Article IX. Finances

Finances shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer under the advisement of the Council.